

Message Text

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ORIGIN COA-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, KS

SUBJECT: KOREAN LOBSTER FISHERY IN ATLANTIC

SEOUL FOR FISHERIES ATTACHE

TOKYO FOR AMB DONALD L. MCKERNAN

1. CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE KOREAN ENTRY INTO LOBSTER FISHERY IN NORTHWEST ATLANTIC HAS BEEN STIMULATED BY INQUIRY FROM KOREAN FIRM NAMOUNG WON YANG FISHERIES COMPANY LIMITED, SEOUL TO US FIRM ABBOTT'S SEAFOODS, NOANK, CONNECTICUT. KOREAN FIRM EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ACQUIRING US LOBSTER VESSELS TO ENTER LOBSTER FISHERY, PRESUMABLY UNDER KOREAN FLAG.

2. DURING SCHEDULED VISIT TO SEOUL WEEK OF NOVEMBER 12 FISHERIES ATTACHE REQUESTED MAKE DISCREET INQUIRY WITH WORKING LEVEL KOREAN OFFICIALS TO ASSESS NATURE AND SCOPE
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OF KOREAN INTEREST IN ENTERING ATLANTIC LOBSTER FISHERIES.

3. CONCERN OVER LOBSTER RELATES TO LONG HISTORY OF EXCLUSIVE USE BY NORTH AMERICAN FISHERMEN AND INDICATION THAT RESOURCE IS PRESENTLY FULLY EXPLOITED. JAPAN, POLAND AND THE USSR HAVE AGREED TO AVOID FISHING FOR LOBSTER IN THE NW ATLANTIC AND THE LATTER TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED TO RETURN TO THE SEA ALL LOBSTER TAKEN.

4. KOREAN ENTRY INTO NW ATLANTIC WOULD BE MET WITH VOCAL DOMESTIC REACTION IN NEW ENGLAND WITH CERTAIN CALL FOR USG TO NEGOTIATE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF KOREAN VESSELS FROM THE AREA. IF KOREAN VESSELS NEVERTHELESS EXPLOITED LOBSTER PRESSURE, PERHAPS INSURMOUNTABLE, WOULD BE TO HAVE USG DECLARE LOBSTER CREATURE OF SHELF WITH STRONG MANDATE FROM CONGRESS FOR STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF US LAW CONCERNING EXCLUSIVE EXPLOITATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF FISHERY RESOURCE.

5. RECENT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC (ICNAF) RESOLVED QUOTA AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES BETWEEN MEMBER STATES IN ICNAF SA 5 AND SA 6 OFF US COAST FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO MAINE. SPECIAL MEETING HELD DUE TO FAILURE AT ANNUAL MEETING TO REACH AGREEMENT ON EXTENT OF FOREIGN FISHING REDUCTION BY DISTANT WATER FISHING STATES NECESSARY TO PREVENT FURTHER DEPLETION OF COASTAL STOCKS. FYI THE DOMESTIC PRESSURE FOR USG WITHDRAWAL FROM ICNAF AND UNILATERAL EXTENSION OF FISHERIES JURISDICTION SOMEWHAT REDUCED BY SUCCESSFUL SPECIAL ICNAF MEETING BUT WOULD LIKELY BE RENEWED BY ENTRY OF KOREANS INTO LOBSTER FISHERY IN NW ATLANTIC. AT A MINIMUM NEW ENGLAND INDUSTRY AND CONGRESSIONAL REPS WOULD CALL FOR DECLARATION OF LOBSTERS AS SHELF CREATURES. RENEWED DEMAND FOR EITHER ACTION COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO OUR BROAD FISHERIES INTERESTS. END FYI.

6. FISHATT IN ADDITION TO PARA 2 ABOVE SHOULD ACQUAINT WORKING LEVEL KOREAN OFFICIALS WITH GENERAL NATURE OF FULL UTILIZATION OF LOBSTER STOCKS, INTENSE LOCAL DOMESTIC CONCERN AND IN GENERAL PROBLEMS THAT SUCH AN ENTERPRISE WOULD CAUSE FOR USG. RUSH
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